A Concise History of the Presbyterian Church

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A CONCISE HISTORY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WITH AN ADDRESS ON THE

200TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

BY

REV. WILLIAM HENRY ROBERTS, D.D., LL.D.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
I	The First Settlements	7
II	The First Presbytery and Synod, 1706-1743	19
III	Division and Growth, 1745-1775	26
IV	National Independence and the Adoption of the Constitution, 1776-1788	32
V	Expansion and Revivals, 1789-1835	43
VI	Old and New School Division, 1835-1869	55
VII	Reunion and Advance, 1870-1900	63
VIII	The Twentieth Century	67

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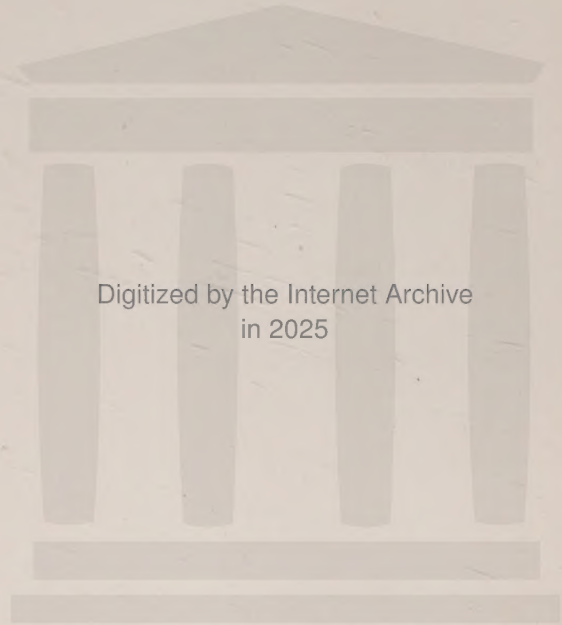

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INTRODUCTION

This concise history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was first issued in 1888, in connection with the centennial celebration of the adoption of the Constitution of the Church. This edition brings the record up to the present time. It is issued with the distinct understanding that it is nothing more than an outline of the more important features of the history, and it does not claim anything like completeness.

WILLIAM H. ROBERTS.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

I
THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS

AMERICAN Presbyterianism is in origin as diverse as are the various peoples who have blended to fo m the American nation. Its component elements are, in the main, English and Scotch-Irish, Scotch and Welsh, French and German. The differing origins and national relationships of the colonists in part account for the existence of the several Presbyterian denominational Churches in the United States.

THE SEVERAL DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

There are ten important denominational Churches in the United States, designated either as Presbyterian or Reformed, which stand for the Reformed Faith and Presbyterian principles of government and worship. Of these, three are traceable to immigration from the mainland of Europe, the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, and the Christian Reformed Church, both of which originated in Holland; and the Reformed (German) Church in the United States, whose

beginnings were in Switzerland and Germany. Four of the Churches are directly connected with the Secession and Relief movements in the Church of Scotland during the eighteenth century, *viz.*, the United Presbyterian Church, the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod, and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod. The English and Welsh Presbyterian elements in the colonies, along with the French Protestants, or Huguenots, combined at an early day with the Scotch and Scotch-Irish elements to form the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was, and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (South) is a branch of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the first separating in 1810, and the second in 1861. The first, however, reunited with the parent Church in 1906. The youngest of the American Presbyterian Churches, the Welsh, originated in the principality of Wales, during the Revival of the eighteenth century, and began organized work in the United States about 1816. These Churches, however they may differ in matters of practice and worship, are substantially one in government, and all maintain the principles of the Reformed system of doctrine as contained either in the Canons of the Synod of Dort, the Westminster

Confession of Faith, or the Heidelberg Catechism. Of these Churches the largest is the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; into it have been gathered elements from all the others, and its history is concisely stated in the following pages.

VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND

The country which gave to the Reformed Churches the Westminster Confession of Faith, was the original home of the first settlers in the American colonies with Presbyterian tendencies. As early as 1572, English Presbyterians organized at Wandsworth, near London, a congregational Presbytery, and the Presbyterian was the controlling element in the Puritan party. This is shown by the fact that the Church of England was by act of Parliament made Presbyterian in government and worship in 1645. The stream of Puritan emigration westward, set in motion from England early in the seventeenth century by Episcopal tyranny, touched first the shores of Virginia. It would appear that before 1614 Rev. Alexander Whitaker was pastor of a church at Bermuda Hundred, in that colony, and that the affairs of the church were "consulted on by the minister and four of the most religious men."

A little later Rev. Robert Bolton ministered to a church on the Elizabeth River, where in 1690, Makemie found Josias Mackie, an Irish Pres-

byterian. This Puritan element in the colony was increased largely until the year 1642, when the royal governor, Sir William Berkeley, commenced a systematic and vigorous persecution of dissenters from the Church of England, which resulted in the disbandment of their churches, and the removal, in 1649, of a considerable portion of them to Maryland. In the latter colony they located at the mouth of the Severn River, on the site of the present city of Annapolis, and called the place Providence. Several attempts to dispossess them were made by the agents of Lord Baltimore, the proprietor of the province, but under leaders named Durand and Bennett—who, it is asserted, were ruling elders—they conducted an armed and successful resistance, and for a time controlled the colony. Their numbers were increased about 1670 by colonists from Fifeshire who had been brought over by Captain Ninian Beale. Some churches distinctively Presbyterian were founded by them, and it is certain that ministers holding Presbyterian views—among whom were Francis Doughty (1658) and Matthew Hill (1667)—preached in their midst. The latter writing to Richard Baxter in 1669, said: "We have many of the Reformed religion, who have a long while lived as sheep without a shepherd, though last year brought in a young man from Ireland, who hath already had good success in his work. We have

room for more ministers." It was in Maryland, also, that William Traill, moderator of the Presbytery of Laggan, Ireland, found temporary refuge in 1682, after his imprisonment in his native land, and there Francis Makemie, of the same Presbytery, a year later began his fruitful labors.

THE NEW ENGLAND COLONISTS

Presbyterianism also entered the American colonies with the settlers of New England. John Robinson, the pastor of the Plymouth Pilgrims while in Holland, has left on record the following declaration of their Church principles: "Touching the ecclesiastical ministry—namely, of pastors for teaching, elders for ruling, deacons for distributing the church's contributions—we do wholly in all points agree with the French Reformed churches." The first church officer to plant his feet on Plymouth Rock, in 1620, was William Brewster, the ruling elder of this church. A considerable number of the colonists at Salem, Massachusetts, were also inclined to Presbyterianism in church government. In 1630 Rev. Richard Denton, a graduate of Cambridge University, England, and a Presbyterian, settled in Massachusetts, with a part of the church which he had previously served for several years at Coley Chapel, Halifax, Yorkshire. In 1637 Rev. Francis Doughty, the displaced vicar of Sodbury,

Gloucestershire, settled in Taunton, Massachusetts, but, holding and teaching the prevalent Presbyterian view on the right to baptism of the infants of baptized persons, he was driven out of the colony by the civil authorities. Early Congregationalism was nearly as intolerant of opposing opinions as was Episcopacy, and tolerated for a comparatively short time only the governmental views of John Robinson. Those colonists who had Presbyterian tendencies found it advantageous to settle in Long Island and Northern New Jersey. Desirous of enjoying peaceful conditions they withdrew from persecution in Massachusetts, seeking shelter with the Dutch Calvinists of New York. This trend of influences is shown clearly in the movements of Rev. Richard Denton, who after a sojourn in Connecticut finally settled at Hempstead, Long Island, where he was pastor from 1644 to 1659, and was definitely recognized as a Presbyterian by the Reformed Dutch pastors of New Amsterdam. That his church, like all churches in these new communities, was composed in part of Independents, cannot affect the fact that the majority of the members were English and Dutch Presbyterians. Denton returned to England in 1659, but his sons, Nathaniel and Daniel, remained, and, it is asserted, founded in 1656 the Presbyterian church of Jamaica, Long Island. If this claim can be substantiated, that church is

the oldest distinctively Presbyterian church in the United States with an unbroken life. The oldest church on Long Island, however, now under the care of the General Assembly, is that of Southold, established in 1640, of which Rev. John Youngs was the first pastor. This church was founded by a colony from New Haven, Connecticut, and came into relation to organized Presbyterianism during the early years of the eighteenth century. It is also worthy of note that the founders of the first Presbyterian churches in North and South New Jersey—in the former, Newark (1666), Elizabeth (1665), Woodbridge (1680); in the latter, Fairfield (1680)—were from Connecticut and Long Island. Connecticut as well as Virginia may rightly be regarded as a portion of the Presbyterian heritage. The church at Freehold, New Jersey (1692), was established by immigrants from Scotland. Further, the Church at New Castle, Delaware, founded in 1657, was originally Reformed Dutch.

NORTH AND SOUTH CAROLINA

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Presbyterian immigrants had pushed their way into all the colonies. Some of these appear to have entered North Carolina as early as 1650, driven there by persecution in Virginia. Presbyterians and Independents settled jointly in South Carolina as early as 1670, and from that

year to 1700 their number was increased by immigrants from Old and New England and from Scotland. The most prominent ministers among them were Rev. Joseph Lord, from Massachusetts, and Rev. Archibald Stobo, a Scotchman, who settled in Charleston in the year 1700. The latter clergyman was a member of the ill-fated Scotch colony, established on the Isthmus of Darien in 1698-1699, and which owing to French and Spanish opposition continued only one year. This colony had connected with it the first regular Presbytery established on the American continent, that of Caledonia. A Presbytery in connection with the Kirk of Scotland was established in South Carolina, somewhere about 1720, but this judicatory did not come into connection with the General Assembly until 1811.

FRENCH AND WELSH CHURCHES

Churches of French Protestants—commonly called Huguenot churches—distinctively Presbyterian both in faith and in polity, were also established in the colonies at an early date and at several points: at New York in 1683, on Staten Island in 1685, at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1686, at Boston in 1687, at New Rochelle, New York, in 1688. These churches originated in the expulsion of Protestants from France, in consequence of the revocation in 1685 of the edict of toleration known as the Edict of Nantes. The

Huguenot churches, with one exception, have ceased to exist. The oldest Welsh Presbyterian Church in the colonies was that in the Great Valley, Chester County, Pennsylvania, founded, it is claimed, about 1685, which had as its ruling elder Mr. David Evan. This church became a part of the General Presbytery in 1710.

THE SCOTCH-IRISH

The religious necessities of the Presbyterian colonists led them to make application time and again to their friends in Great Britain and Ireland for a supply of ministers. In 1680 the Presbytery of Laggan, Ireland, already referred to, received a letter from Colonel William Stevens, a member of the council of the province of Maryland, entreating that ministers be sent to that colony and to Virginia. In compliance with this request, Rev. Francis Makemie, a native of Rathmelton, Ireland, came to Maryland in 1683. Mr. Makemie's landing marked a new era in the development of American Presbyterianism. At the time of his advent isolated Presbyterian ministers, and churches in large part dependent upon an itinerant ministry, were scattered from New England to the Carolinas. He personally organized churches at Snow Hill and Rehoboth, Maryland, in 1683. Further, within a few years after his arrival, owing to prelatical persecution, a stream of immigration set in from Scotland and the North of Ireland,

which largely swelled the Presbyterian population in the middle and southern colonies. This movement was of great and permanent value to the Presbyterian Church. It has continued for two hundred years with an increasing volume and undiminished influence. The larger portion of the immigrants settled in New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and the valley of Virginia. No race of men has suffered or dared more in the cause of civil and religious liberty, than that whose common name is the Scotch-Irish. Like the Puritans, they sought in the colonies liberty to worship God free from the tyranny of narrow-minded prelates, and like the Presbyterian Puritans they were animated by high and noble aims, a sincere sympathy with intellectual culture and a deeply-religious spirit. Independents in New England, and Episcopalians in the middle colonies, did deny to others the freedom they claimed for themselves; Presbyterians, however, whether of British, Scotch-Irish or continental origin, never assailed the rights of their fellow men. Holding strenuously to the truth that "God alone is Lord of the conscience," they practiced the doctrine they professed. And none have been more persistent in maintaining true liberty in Church and in State, none have been more thoroughly Presbyterian in doctrine and in practice, than the men of that race whose traditions cluster about the

siege of Londonderry and the conventicles of the Covenanters. To them American Presbyterianism is largely indebted for its vigor, tenacity and prosperity.

NEW YORK

The first English Presbyterian minister who preached in the city of New York appears to have been Rev. Francis Doughty, already referred to, who in 1643 held services in the Reformed Dutch church founded in 1623 and located within the fort. He remained in New York until 1648, removing to Flushing about 1649, and about 1658 to Maryland, where his brother-in-law, William Stone, was deputy governor. After his departure from New York, English services, when held, were conducted until 1652 by Rev. Richard Denton, of Hempstead. It was for the so-called crime of preaching the gospel to the Presbyterians of the city, that Rev. Francis Makemie was tried and imprisoned in 1707 by the Episcopal governor, Lord Cornbury. A Presbyterian church was not organized in New York City until 1717, and it is interesting to note in connection with the event that the General Synod in 1719 ordered one tenth of a missionary collection taken up by the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, Scotland, to be given to the Presbyterian congregation of New York for "the support of the gospel among them." The large contributions

now made in the city of New York, for both home and foreign mission purposes, are evidence of the value of investments made in accordance with the Scriptural advice, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."

PHILADELPHIA

The first Presbyterian congregation in Philadelphia met in 1692 in the "Barbadoes Company Warehouse." In 1698 Rev. Jedidiah Andrews, a graduate of Harvard College, began his ministrations in the city. In the year 1701, Mr. Andrews was ordained and installed pastor of what is now the First Church. An Episcopalian writer in 1703, commenting on the prospects of Presbyterianism in Philadelphia, wrote, "They have here a Presbyterian meeting and minister, one called Andrews; but they are not like to increase here." As Philadelphia Presbyterianism in 1703, with its one weak congregation, is compared with Philadelphia Presbyterianism in 1916, with its more than one hundred churches, the exclamation springs naturally to the lips, "What hath God wrought!"

II

THE FIRST PRESBYTERY AND SYNOD, 1706-1743

THE FIRST PRESBYTERY

Increase in population, joined with greater facilities for intercommunication, made it both desirable and possible to give colonial Presbyterianism an organized form. In the movement for this result Makemie was the master spirit; he filled, in fact, the office of an apostle. His journeys extended from South Carolina to Massachusetts, and he sought assistance both in Great Britain and in New England. Indefatigable in labor, he suffered persecution and dared imprisonment in behalf of the cause he had so heartily espoused, and finally secured the organization of the first American Presbytery, it is believed, in March, 1706. For some time it was held that the year of organization was 1705, but that view was taken owing to the fact that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the legal year began on March 25, but a change was made in all English lands to January 1 as New Year's Day, in 1752. March 1705 of the eighteenth century, therefore, was by our calendar, March, 1706. To make the matter yet clearer, December the twelfth month of the present year is the tenth (decem) month of

the old legal year. The exact day cannot be determined, owing to the loss of the first page of the records. The ministers constituting the body were Francis Makemie, of Accomac County, Virginia; Jedidiah Andrews, of Philadelphia; John Wilson, of New Castle, Delaware; Samuel Davis, of Lewes, Delaware; Nathaniel Taylor, of Marlborough, Maryland; John Hampton, of Snow Hill, Maryland; and George MacNish, from the same colony. The first meeting of the Presbytery of which record remains was held at Freehold, New Jersey, December 29, 1706, and the business engaged in was the examination, with a view to ordination, of a Mr. John Boyd. At the meeting held at Philadelphia, March 22, 1707, the names of the following ruling elders appear in the minutes: "Joseph Yard, William Smith, John Gardiner, James Stoddard." It is proper here to state that this first Presbytery never calls itself by a local name, and that its true appellation is therefore judged to be "the *General* Presbytery." It has been held in some quarters that the first Presbytery was simply an association of ministers for purposes of fellowship and counsel. This is not the fact. Ruling elders were present, representing the churches, in all the meetings, ecclesiastical acts were adopted appropriate only to a Presbytery, and in 1712, in connection with the case of Rev. Mr. Wade, minister at Woodbridge, the record reads, "we admitted him as a

member of our Presbytery, and he submitted himself willingly to our Constitution." The Presbytery was "in the exercise of Presbyterian government."

THE GENERAL SYNOD ORGANIZED

It will be noticed that Presbyterian ministers from the vicinity of New York or from the Carolinas were not present in the General Presbytery at its earlier meetings; ministers and churches from those sections of the country came into relation to organized Presbyterianism at later dates. The first of such churches to come under the care of Presbytery were the English churches on Long Island, and these were followed by the Welsh churches in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. By the year 1716, the Church had increased to such an extent that it was deemed advisable to constitute a Synod, and organize four Presbyteries, *viz.*, Philadelphia, New Castle, Snow Hill, and Long Island. The Synod met for the first time at Philadelphia, September 17, 1717, the moderator at the opening session being Rev. George MacNish, of Jamaica, Long Island, and the moderator elected being Rev. Jedidiah Andrews, of Philadelphia. The Church then consisted of nineteen ministers, about forty churches and some three thousand communicants. One of the principal acts of the Synod was the establishment in 1717 of a fund for pious uses to be disposed of

according to the discretion of the Synod. This act was the initiative movement in connection with all the benevolent and missionary work of the Church.

THE SYNOD OF NEW ENGLAND

The year of the establishment of the General Synod and the following years, were years of considerable immigration into the colonies from the North of Ireland, in part owing to persecution and in part to oppression by landlords. A portion of the immigrants settled in New England, and churches composed of them were established at Londonderry, New Hampshire; Worcester, Massachusetts; Casco Bay, Maine, and other places. In 1745 the Presbytery of Londonderry was organized, and in 1775 the Synod of New England was erected, composed of the Presbyteries of Londonderry, Salem and Palmer. This Synod, however, owing to the isolation and feebleness of the churches, was dissolved in 1782, and its ministers and churches were formed into the Presbytery of Salem—a name changed in 1793 to Londonderry. This latter Presbytery did not come under the care of the General Assembly until 1809, and was made a part of the Synod of Albany. The Presbyterians of New England for many years were left to themselves, but during this century have been organized (1912) into a Synod, which has been greatly prospered.

THE ADOPTING ACT, 1729

In 1729 the General Synod passed what is called the Adopting Act, by which it was agreed "that all the ministers of this Synod, or that shall hereafter be admitted into this Synod, shall declare their agreement in and approbation of the Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster," and "also adopt the said Confession as the confession of our faith." From this year forward this solemn declaration on the part of its ministers has been required by the Church, with the understanding that scruples with respect to any article or articles of said Confession or Catechisms, shall be made known to the judicatory into whose membership ministers desire to enter, and their accordance with essential faith shall be judged, not by the applicants for admission, but by the judicatory. In this connection, it is to be remembered that the Synod in 1721 said that "we have been many years in the exercise of Presbyterian government and discipline as exercised by the Presbyterians in the best Reformed Churches." The Adopting Act of 1729 was therefore a formal adoption of the Westminster Standards alike of doctrine, polity and worship as the definite law of the Church. By this Act the American Church became a "Confessional Church," a church holding to a definite system of doctrine.

The General Synod in the same year took action in the line of the denial of the authority of the State over the Church. Chapter xxiii of the Westminster Confession of Faith deals with the power of the civil magistrate, and the Synod denied to the civil magistrate what the Westminster Assembly permitted—a controlling power over Synods with respect to "the exercise of their ministerial authority." It also denied to the civil magistrate the "power to persecute any for their religion." These were notable acts on the part of the Synod, appearing to be the first declaration, by an organized Church on American soil, of the freedom of the Church from control by the State. Even in New England at this time Church and State were united. Congregationalism, as first established in the colonies, was a chain whose links were steel. An organization of so-called independent churches, its ministers were held to orthodoxy and its members to right living, by the strong arm of the civil law. It was the civil magistrate, at the call of the Church, who drove out from Massachusetts Williams the Baptist, and Doughty the Presbyterian. The Congregational was the established church in Connecticut until 1818, and in Massachusetts until 1834, and even to-day in three New England states there are legal provisions for the support of Congregational Churches by taxation. To

the Presbyterian must the honor be given of the first definite statement, by an organized body on American soil, of what to-day is recognized as the distinctively American and true doctrine, of the right relation between Church and State "a free Church in a free State."

III

DIVISION AND GROWTH, 1745-1775

THE OLD AND NEW SIDE

The first division of the Presbyterian Church took place in 1745. The occasions, strange as it may seem, were the spiritual destitutions prevalent in the colonies, and the revival of religion which, beginning in New England, in part under Jonathan Edwards, in 1734, extended to the Middle Colonies, and was intensified by the preaching of the celebrated evangelist, Rev. George Whitefield. The Synod did not divide, as some writers hold, according to lines of nationality. The parties to the division were known as "Old Side" and "New Side," but the former were not solely Scotch and Irish, nor the latter English and Welsh. The leaders of the "New Side" were William and Gilbert Tennent, ministers born in Ireland, and foremost among the "Old Side" party was Jedidiah Andrews, a New England man and pastor of the First Church, Philadelphia. Further, Yale and Harvard Colleges championed the "Old Side." The strife arose first in connection with the standard of ministerial qualifications. William Tennent had established the first Presbyterian theological school in this land at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, in 1726—an institution

commonly called the "Log College." By 1737 he had prepared seven or eight persons for the ministry. Objections were made to the examination and ordination of these students, by some members of the Synod, on the ground that the course of study which they had pursued was not adequate to the requirements of the ministry. The Presbytery of New Brunswick sided with the Tennents, and while the controversy was in progress Whitefield came upon the ground, revivals of religion broke out anew, and as a result a still greater need for ministers was created. Tennent and those who sided with him entered earnestly into revival work, and to their methods, as well as to the qualifications of the "Log College" ministers, objections were made. The "New Side," however, was by no means blameless in conduct, for its members committed many acts, and published pamphlets, against their opponents of a character not warranted by Christian charity. Dr. Charles Hodge states that the brethren of the New Brunswick Presbytery were the aggressors in the controversy, but on the other hand the "Old Side" resorted to violent measures for redress which widened the breach between them and their adversaries. After repeated efforts for reconciliation had failed, the Presbytery of New Brunswick in 1741 withdrew from the Synod, and in 1745, with the Presbytery of New York and certain ministers of the Presbytery of New Castle,

formed the Synod of New York. It is here to be noted that the terms "Old Side" and "New Side," designating the parties to this early division of the Church, are not in any manner equivalent to the terms "Old School" and "New School," in use a century later.

THE FIRST COLLEGE

One good result from the controversy respecting ministerial qualifications, carried on by the "Old Side" and the "New Side," was the impetus given to the cause of ministerial education. The former party established in 1744 an academy. The "New Side" established the institution now known as Princeton College, which has exerted a widespread and beneficial molding influence on American Presbyterianism. The charter of this college was granted in 1746; its first title was "The College of New Jersey," and its first president was Rev. Jonathan Dickinson. Located first at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, it was afterward removed to Newark, and again in the autumn of 1755 to the town where it is now established. Princeton College, now Princeton University, it should be distinctly remembered, was founded for the purpose of securing to the Presbyterian Church an educated ministry. It was the first of the institutions to make clear the fact that the Presbyterian is "a college building not a cathedral-building Church."

THE STANDARDS THE BASIS OF UNION, 1758

The two bodies into which the General Synod had been divided in 1745, *viz.*, the Synod of Philadelphia and the Synod of New York, were reunited in 1758 on the basis of the reception of the Westminster Confession as their Confession of Faith, and also of adherence to the Forms of Worship and Discipline contained in the Westminster Directory. The terms of union also specified that candidates for the ministry should give to the Presbytery licensing them, competent satisfaction as to their learning. At the time of reunion the Church consisted of ninety-eight ministers, about two hundred congregations, many preaching stations, and some ten thousand communicants.

THE MISSIONARY ADVANCE

During the period of the division, just referred to, the famous and typical mission Presbytery of Hanover was organized (1755) by the Synod of New York. Finding a center in Hanover County, Virginia, this Presbytery extended from Western Pennsylvania to Georgia. Within its bounds, prior to its organization, labored for years, at times in loneliness, that ideal minister and missionary, Rev. Samuel Davies, afterwards president of Princeton College. Born of Welsh parents in the colony of Delaware, he was, next to Whitefield, the most eloquent preacher of his

age, and was also at once the champion of freedom, the founder of churches and the friend of learning. The limits of his own parish were distant from each other nearly a hundred miles, but his zeal added to the care of his own numerous churches, earnest efforts in Virginia, New England and Great Britain for the advancement of the interests of religion in all the colonies. The impulse given by this untiring preacher of the Word and by his colaborers to the Presbyterian Church in the South and West, as well as in the Middle Colonies, cannot be overestimated.

ADVANTAGES OF THE DIVISION

The division of 1745 was not an unmixed evil; its influence in some directions was undeniably unfortunate, but nevertheless the wrath of man was overruled of God. The principles of the Church were more clearly defined, the duty of charity was enforced, the value of revivals of religion was emphasized, the cause of ministerial education was greatly stimulated, and union led naturally to resolute and energetic action in church extension. The period extending from the year 1758, the date of reunion, to the year 1775, was one of enlarged activity. The Presbytery of Dutchess County was organized (1763), and the Presbytery of Orange, North Carolina, (1770); the number of ministers was nearly doubled. John Witherspoon was inaugurated

(1768) president of Princeton College, and also professor of divinity; a general missionary collection was ordered (1767) for the purpose of maintaining the preaching of the gospel on the frontier; a scheme for the support of candidates for the ministry was approved (1771), and a committee appointed (1773) to supervise the distribution of religious publications. These last three acts of the Synod were severally the germs of our Boards of Home Missions, Education, and Publication.

IV

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION, 1776-1788

THE STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

It was not alone, however, in matters relating to religion that the Church took action with a view to the best interests of the colonies. Religious liberty at this period was endangered by a proposal to set up in the colonies an Episcopal establishment, for whose support so-called dissenters would be taxed, and under which they would suffer many grievous burdens. To prevent the carrying out of a scheme so fraught with peril to the highest welfare of American Christians, the Synod entered (1766) into a plan of union with the General Association of Connecticut, one main purpose of which was to protect the rights of the churches. In fact, one of the most powerful influences in bringing on and carrying to successful termination the American Revolution, was the invincible opposition of Presbyterians and Congregationalists to this threatened Episcopal attack upon the inalienable rights of conscience. The influence of religious forces upon human affairs is too often overlooked by secular historians.

THE CHURCH AND AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

The opening of the Revolutionary struggle found the Presbyterian ministers and churches to a man on the side of the colonies. In 1775 the General Synod issued a pastoral letter, an extract from which indicates the spirit prevailing in the Church, and reads: "Be careful to maintain the union which at present subsists through all the colonies. In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, consists of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiased manner by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect and encouraged in their difficult service, not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their resolutions and let it be seen that they are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into execution." Contemporary with this letter of the Synod was the famous Mecklenburgh Declaration of Independence, renouncing all allegiance to Great Britain, passed by a convention in Western North Carolina composed of delegates who were mostly Presbyterians, thus forestalling the action of the Colonial Congress in the same line by more than a year. Further, in the sessions of the Congress, the influence of no delegate exceeded that wielded by Rev. John Witherspoon, president of Princeton College, the only clerical signer of the Declaration of Inde-

pendence—"a man Scotch in accent and strength of conviction, but American at heart." The American Presbyterian Church never faltered in her devotion to the cause of the independence of these United States; her ministers and members periled all for its support, being ready, with Witherspoon, to go to the block, if need be, in defense of civil and religious liberty.

THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION

With the restoration of peace, in 1783, the Church gradually recovered from the evils wrought by war, and the need of a fuller organization was deeply felt. The independence of the United States had created new conditions for the Christian Churches as well as for the American people. Presbyterians were no longer merely tolerated in certain parts of the country, but were equally entitled with Episcopalians and Congregationalists, in all the states, to full religious and civil rights. In 1785 the General Synod, therefore, appointed a committee to draw up a Plan of government and discipline. This committee presented a final report in 1787, which was sent down to the Presbyteries and churches for their consideration, but not for adoption or approval. On the 28th of May, 1788, the Synod, having previously amended this plan, formally adopted it as the Constitution of the Church. On the same day it ordered that the Confession of

Faith, amended the day previous, should be a part of the Constitution, and on the day following it also ordered that the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Directory for Worship should be parts of the same instrument. The Confession of Faith is substantially that of the Westminster Assembly, the only alteration of note in it being in Chapter xxiii, which deals with the civil magistrate. Instead of giving to the magistrate, as is done in the original Westminster Confession, power to control and supervise Synods, the General Synod declared it to be the duty of civil magistrates "to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger." The Catechisms were adopted with one amendment — namely, the striking out in the Larger Catechism, from the catalogue of sins enumerated as forbidden by the second commandment, the sin of "tolerating a false religion." The divergences from the original Westminster standards in the governmental portions of the Constitution were numerous, and the Directory for Worship is largely a new work. In the text of the latter, as proposed in 1787, forms of prayer were introduced, but the Synod declined to ap

prove of anything approaching the character of a liturgy. Worthy of notice is it in connection with the adoption of the Constitution that the changes were all made in the direction of liberty—of liberty of worship, of freedom in prayer, and, above all, of the liberty of the Church from any control by the State. From its first establishment, the Presbyterian Church has been a foremost advocate of liberty alike in things civil and religious. And in 1788 it became a Church with a Constitution adapted to the needs of a new, a growing, and a great nation.

THE DOCTRINAL SYSTEM

The adoption of the Constitution in 1788 leads naturally to the statement of the fact that the Churches holding to the Presbyterian system have developed in the course of their history such a natural relation to one great type of Christian doctrine that the words Calvinistic and Presbyterian are to a large extent synonymous. The controlling idea of the Presbyterian or Calvinistic system of thought, both theoretically and practically, is the doctrine of the unconditioned sovereignty of God. By this sovereignty is meant the absolute control of the universe in all that it contains, whether visible or invisible things, by the one supreme, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent Spirit, for wise, just, holy and loving ends, known fully alone to himself. This

divine sovereignty finds practical expression in the Presbyterian system through its organizing principle, the sovereignty of the Word of God as the supreme and infallible rule of faith and practice. The Presbyterian system accepts and incorporates, as of perpetual binding obligation, only those principles and regulations which can be proved to have a divine warrant. This obligation applies to doctrine, government and worship, and this obligation the Presbyterian Church reaffirmed in 1788.

THE CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The supremacy of God's Word over human thought and conduct, is the reason why Presbyterians claim that their Church government as expressed in the Standards of 1788, finds clear warrant in the Holy Scriptures. One of its chief sources, it is asserted, was the Jewish ecclesiastical system of the time of Christ. The elders of the synagogue became the elders of the Christian congregation; the chief ruler of the synagogue was reproduced in the episcopos or parochial bishop; the local sanhedrin was modified and established as the Presbytery; and the Great Sanhedrin was the prototype of synods, general assemblies, and councils. The principles of New Testament church government further led to definite statement of the views taken of the Church, her officers and judicatories as follows:

the universal Church consists of all persons who profess the true religion, together with their children; the power of the Church is simply declarative and spiritual; there is but one order in the Christian ministry; ruling elders, elected by the congregations, are to be united with ministers in the government of the churches; and the temporal affairs are to be managed by deacons or trustees. The judicatories or church courts established in successive order are (1) the Session, governing the particular church, and consisting of the pastor and the ruling elders: (2) the Presbytery, governing all the congregations within a limited territory, and consisting of all the ministers therein and one elder from each Church; (3) the Synod, consisting of at least three Presbyteries, exercising supervisory authority over both Presbyteries and congregations, and consisting of both ministers and elders, and (4) the General Assembly, having supervisory power over the general interests of the whole denomination, and constituting the bond of union, peace, correspondence and confidence. The power of these church courts is both legislative, executive and judicial, and the higher courts are given authority over the lower courts, as set forth definitely in the Constitution of the Church. They all emphasize that Presbyterian government is not by single men, such as diocesan bishops, but by representative assemblies.

TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP

On the important matter of church membership, the Presbyterian Church, in 1788 and since, has made clear that the terms of admission of members into the visible Church are the same as the conditions of salvation revealed in the Holy Scriptures, *viz.:* belief on the part of the applicant in one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the divine and all-sufficient Saviour, joined with the declaration of a sincere purpose to lead a life acceptable to God in Jesus Christ. No church, it is claimed, has a right either to add to or take from these terms or conditions. Church members as to their conduct are under the control of the Session of the particular church, providing, however, that every member deeming himself aggrieved may appeal or complain to a higher court.

THE WORSHIP APPROVED

Presbyterian worship as reaffirmed in the Directory of Worship in 1788, is based as to its character on the facts that a human priesthood is unknown to the New Testament, and that the only priest of the new dispensation is the Lord Jesus Christ. Ministers are not priests, but preachers. Sacerdotalism, therefore, whether in connection with the sacraments, or enforced liturgies, or priestly vestments, has no place in the worship of the Presbyterian churches. The

sacraments are simply ordinances, wherein by sensible signs Christ and his benefits "are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." Prayer is the free intercourse of the soul with God, and is therefore to be voluntary. Ministers are not mediators between God and man, possessed of a delegated divine authority to forgive sins, but simply leaders of the people in all that constitutes the worship of and fellowship with the triune God. True worshipers worship the Father neither in Samaria nor in Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth. God is nigh to every penitent and believing soul.

By its doctrine the Presbyterian Church has always honored the divine sovereignty without denying human responsibility; by its polity it has exalted the headship of Christ while giving full development to the activities of the Christian people; and in its worship it has magnified God, while it brings blessing to man, by insisting upon the right of free access on the part of every soul to him whose grace cannot be fettered in its ministrations by any human ordinances whatsoever.

THE CONTEMPORANEOUS CONSTITUTIONS

The Constitution of the Church was adopted in the same year in which the Constitution of the United States was framed. The influence which the Presbyterian Church exercised

for the securing of unity between the colonies was zealously employed, at the close of the war for independence, to bring them into a closer union. The main hindrance to the formation of the Federal Union, as it now exists, lay in the reluctance of many of the states to yield to a general government any of the powers which they possessed. The federal party in its advocacy of closer union had no more earnest and eloquent supporters than John Witherspoon, Elias Boudinot, and other Presbyterian members of the Continental Congress. Sanderson, in his "Lives of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence," states that "Witherspoon strongly combated the opinion expressed in Congress that a lasting confederation among the States was impracticable, and he warmly maintained the absolute necessity of union to impart vigor and success to the measures of government." In this he was aided by many who had come to the views which he, as a Presbyterian, had always maintained. Slowly but surely, ideas of government in harmony with those of the Westminster Standards, were accepted as formative principles for the government of the United States, and that by many persons not connected with the Presbyterian Church. Among these were the great leaders in the Constitutional Convention, James Madison, a graduate of Princeton, who sat as a student under Witherspoon; Alexander Hamilton,

of Scotch parentage, whose familiarity with Presbyterian government is fully attested; and above all George Washington, who though an Episcopalian, had so great a regard for the Presbyterian Church and its services to the country, that he not only partook of Holy Communion with its members, but gave public expression to his high esteem. It is not that the claim is made that the principles of Presbyterian government were the sole source from which sprang the government of the Republic, but it is asserted that mightiest among the forces which made the colonies a nation were the governmental principles found in the Westminster Standards, and that the Presbyterian Church taught, practiced, and maintained in fullness, first in this land, that form of government in accordance with which the Republic has been organized. The historian Bancroft says, "the Revolution of 1776, so far as it was affected by religion, was a Presbyterian measure. It was the natural outgrowth of the principles which the Presbyterianism of the Old World planted in her sons, the English Puritans, the Scotch Covenanters, the French Huguenots, the Dutch Calvinists, and the Presbyterians of Ulster."

V

EXPANSION AND REVIVALS, 1789-1835

THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

After the adoption of the Constitution, and in accordance with its provisions, the Synod appointed the General Assembly to meet in the city of Philadelphia, in the Second Presbyterian Church, on the third Thursday of May, 1789. It also resolved that, the General Synod be divided into four Synods, severally named New York and New Jersey, Philadelphia, Virginia, and The Carolinas. The first of these Synods included the Presbyteries of Dutchess County, New Brunswick, New York, and Suffolk; the second, those of Baltimore, Carlisle, Lewes, New Castle, and Philadelphia; the third, those of Hanover, Lexington, and Redstone; the fourth, those of Abingdon, Orange, and South Carolina. The moderator appointed by the General Synod to open the Assembly was Rev. John Witherspoon, D. D., of Princeton, New Jersey, and the moderator elected was Rev. John Rodgers, D.D., of New York City. The basis of the representation of the Presbyteries in the first General Assembly was that every Presbytery consisting of not more than six ministers should send one minister and one elder as commissioners,

and in like proportion for every six ministers. The basis of representation at present is one minister and one elder for every twenty-four ministers, or for each additional fractional number of ministers not less than twelve. One of the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism is the coöperation of the people with the ministry in church government, and this end is attained through the presence in all the church judicatories of ruling elders, who are called in the Constitution "the representatives of the people." The relation of the General Assembly to the "people" is emphasized in the Form of Government, by the statement that as the highest judicatory of the Church "it shall represent in one body, all the particular churches of this denomination."

THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

In 1792 the General Assembly entered into correspondence with the General Association of the Churches of Connecticut, by the appointment of a standing committee. One result of the correspondence was the admission of delegates from the Association to sit in the Assembly, with the right to speak, but not to vote. In 1793 Timothy Dwight, Jonathan Edwards (the younger) and Matthias Burnet, took their seats in the General Assembly as delegates from the General Association. In 1794 the delegates of the Association

were permitted to vote. In 1809 the General Association of Vermont, in 1810 that of New Hampshire, and in 1811 that of Massachusetts, were allowed representation in the General Assembly. By the year 1830, however, owing to opposition based mainly on constitutional grounds, this usage had altogether ceased. As a partial warrant for the above-mentioned practice, it is sufficient to state that the majority of the churches of Connecticut, at the close of the eighteenth century, regarded themselves as being practically Presbyterian churches. In 1799 the Hartford North Association made the following declaration: "This Association gives information to all whom it may concern that the constitution of the churches in the State of Connecticut, founded on the common usages and the Confession of Faith, Heads of Agreement and Articles of Church Discipline adopted at the earliest period of the settlement of the State, is not Congregational, but contains the essentials of the government of the Church of Scotland or the Presbyterian Church in America." This action will explain why plans of correspondence and of union were possible, between the General Association of Connecticut and the General Assembly. It is also an explanation of the strength of Presbyterianism in Western New York, Northern Ohio and other parts of the country where New England elements abound in the population.

THE PLAN OF UNION OF 1801

Another result of the correspondence entered into with the General Association of Connecticut, was the establishment in 1801 of the Plan of Union. The year 1798 was a time of spiritual depression, evidenced by the lack of vitality in the churches, and in the general prevalence in the country of infidelity, irreligion and immorality. In 1799 and 1800, however, the Holy Spirit graciously visited Central and Western New York, and Kentucky, in revivals of religion, while the Church as a whole was decidedly quickened by His influence. Many converts were added to the churches, and the organization of new churches became imperative in the frontier districts. To avoid conflict or collision in the work of church extension, the General Assembly and the General Association devised the Plan of Union. This scheme allowed Congregational ministers to serve Presbyterian churches, and *vice versa*, without interfering with the relation of either ministers or churches to the bodies under whose control they naturally belonged. In cases of dispute, the questions at issue could be referred either to a Presbytery or to a council. Further, mixed churches of Congregationalists and Presbyterians could be governed by committeemen, and be represented in Presbytery by one of the latter if desired. As a result of the last provision named, committeemen sat at times as commissioners in

the General Assembly. The plan remained in operation for a generation. At least five Congregational Associations became officially parts of the Presbyterian Church. That it was useful to the churches consenting to it and to the cause of Christ, for a time, is freely admitted; that it brought into the Presbyterian Church a large and vigorous New England element is unquestionable; but it also introduced germs of strife, for its features were main causes of the controversies and conflicts which in 1837 led to the great division.

THE REVIVAL OF 1799-1800

The revival in Kentucky deserves more than passing notice. Presbyterianism established itself in this state as early as 1783, in the person of the justly celebrated Rev. David Rice. In 1786 the General Synod constituted the ministers and churches in the territory into the Presbytery of Transylvania, and the growth of the Church was so rapid that in 1802 the Synod of Kentucky was erected by the General Assembly. The population of the state was hardy and courageous. As in many other new communities, religion exerted comparatively little influence. In 1799, however, a revival spirit began to be manifested in certain churches, and by July, 1800, included in its sweep the whole region. Great multitudes gathered to listen to the gospel, and the impossibility of

accommodating them in churches and towns led to the establishment of "camp meetings." These meetings on this side of the Atlantic are therefore Presbyterian in origin, and were warranted by the circumstances of the people among whom they were first instituted, for it was the revival which brought about the camp meeting. The revival also led to a demand for ministers beyond the supply, and the excesses attending it gave rise from 1803 onward to bitter controversy. The action of the Cumberland Presbytery in ordaining to the ministry persons, who, in the judgment of the Synod of Kentucky, were not qualified for the office, either by learning or by sound doctrine, occasioned the dissolution of the Presbytery by the Synod in 1806, and finally, in 1810, to the initial steps in the establishment of what was known as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES

The next important step in the history of the Church was the establishment of a theological seminary at Princeton, New Jersey. Previous to the founding of this seminary, candidates for the ministry were trained for their work, under the care of such pastors of churches as were deemed qualified for so important a trust. The Church, however, had grown to so great an extent that the demand for ministers could not be supplied under the pastoral system of training, and in addition,

the influence of the system was not always such as to secure advantageous results. The Assembly established, therefore, in 1812, a theological seminary, at Princeton, New Jersey, and Dr. Archibald Alexander was elected the first professor. Other similar institutions were founded as the need for them arose. The dates of the establishment of the theological seminaries other than Princeton are: Auburn (New York), 1819; Union (Virginia), 1824; Western (Allegheny), 1827; Lane (Cincinnati), 1829; McCormick (Chicago), 1830; Columbia (South Carolina), 1831; Union (New York), 1836; Danville (Kentucky), 1853; German (Dubuque), 1856; Biddle (colored), North Carolina), 1868; German (Bloomfield, New Jersey), 1869; San Francisco, 1871; Lincoln (colored, Pennsylvania), 1871; Omaha, (Nebraska), 1891. Of these, the seminaries in Virginia and South Carolina are now in connection with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and Union Seminary (New York) has renounced its connection with the Assembly.

STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH IN 1812

It is interesting to note the strength of the Presbyterian Church west of the Alleghenies at the date of the foundation of the first theological seminary. The estimate submitted is based upon statements furnished by missionaries sent out by

the General Assembly, and is drawn from Gillett's "History of the Presbyterian Church":

	Pop.	Presb. Ministers.	Presb. Churches.
Western Pennsylvania.....	200,000	70	101
Ohio.....	330,000	49	78
Western Virginia.....	75,000	3	12
Kentucky.....	400,000	40	91
Tennessee.....	260,000	26	79
Louisiana.....	120,000	0	0
Missouri Territory.....	21,000	0	0
Mississippi Territory.....	58,000	4	6
Indiana Territory.....	25,000	1	1
Illinois Territory.....	13,000	0	0
Total.....	1,502,000	193	368

EARLY HOME MISSIONARIES

The demands of the westward-moving tide of population were the influential causes in the establishment of the theological seminaries, and those demands have kept pace through all the years with the development and growth of the nation. In the newer regions it is still as true as it was in 1812, that the churches far exceed the ministers in number, and it is also true that there is, as of old, much call for self-denial and consecration. What self-denial on the part of home missionaries meant in the early years of the nineteenth century, may be inferred from the reports made to the General Assembly by the missionaries of the day. One of them, for instance James Hall, missionary to the Mississippi Territory

"served on his mission seven months and thirteen days, and received eighty-six dollars" for his support. Another, John Lindley, for four months' work, during which he "baptized eleven children and preached ninety-six times," received twelve dollars and fifty cents. The men of this earlier day willingly counted all things but loss for Christ, and to their self-denying labors the Presbyterian Church, humanly speaking, owes her present position of power and influence west of the Alleghenies.

GROWTH 1800-1830

The growth of the Church from 1800 to 1830 was very decided. The total membership in the first year named was about twenty thousand; in the last it was reported as being 173,327. The regions in which progress was chiefly made are in part indicated by the dates of the organization of new Synods, *viz.*, Kentucky and Pittsburgh, 1802; Albany, 1803; Geneva, 1812; North Carolina, with South Carolina and Georgia, 1813; Ohio and Tennessee, 1814; Geneva, 1821; New Jersey, 1823; Western Reserve, 1825; West Tennessee and Indiana, 1826; Utica, Mississippi and South Alabama, and Cincinnati, 1829; and Illinois, 1831.

THE HOME MISSION ENTERPRISE

The progress in Christian enterprise during the period is exhibited by the mission work under-

taken by the General Assembly. Home mission effort was begun by the General Synod as early as 1719, as already stated, and was continued by the appointment from time to time of committees of supervision. The General Assembly itself at first directly controlled the work; but in 1802 led thereto by the growing importance of the interests in hand, established a standing committee on home missions. This committee was formally constituted by the Assembly in 1816 as the Board of Missions, and in 1829 the Western Missionary Society of the Synod of Pittsburgh was consolidated with the Assembly's Board of Domestic Missions. Beginning in the city of New York in 1719, the home mission cause has grown little by little, until in 1916 it covers through the work of the Assembly, of the Synods, and of Presbyteries, every state and territory.

THE FOREIGN MISSION ADVANCE

The foreign mission work of the Church had also its day of small things. The first action of the General Synod in this direction appears to have been the ordination of Azariah Horton (1742) as missionary to the Indians in the province of New York. In 1751 collections were ordered for Indian missions by the Synod of New York, and in 1752 the proceeds were committed to those self-denying missionaries and faithful ministers, David and John Brainerd, whose work among the

Delawares was greatly blessed. Both the General Synod and the General Assembly were unremitting in their earnest advocacy of missions to the aborigines. The movement for missions to the heathen, outside the United States, was ushered in with the commencement of the present century. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Boston) was established in 1810, and many Presbyterian churches contributed through it their gifts for general mission work in foreign lands. In 1817 the General Assembly resolved to enter itself upon foreign mission work, and founded, in conjunction with the Reformed Dutch and the Associate Reformed Churches, the United Foreign Missionary Society, located in New York, but this society in 1826 was consolidated with the American Board. The General Assembly of 1838, however, deeming it best for the Church to control her own mission work, established the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, and this Board has been greatly prospered in all its undertakings and witnesses to-day for Christ all round the world.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

Another important feature of the growth of the Church during this period was the organization of the Board of Education. This step was the natural outgrowth of the policy which established in 1812 a theological seminary. The Presbyterian

Church and education have an elective affinity each for the other. Her early leaders were nearly all thoroughly educated men, Denton, for instance, being a student of Cambridge University, England; Makemie, of Glasgow University, Scotland; Andrews, of Harvard College, Massachusetts; and Dickinson, of Yale College, Connecticut. Further, the Church has always maintained a high standard of ministerial qualifications. True, this standard has been twice a cause of schism—in 1745 and in 1810—but the Church has never lowered her requirements in response to demands from any quarter. Believing an educated ministry to be her strength, she has founded and maintained academies, colleges and theological seminaries, and has also justly provided in part for the support, during long years of study, of worthy candidates for the high office of an "ambassador for Christ." This work as a whole was formally entrusted in 1819 to the Board of Education, and through it as an instrument, many are "the winners of souls" who have been prepared for the service to which the Master called them.

VI

OLD AND NEW SCHOOL DIVISION, 1835-1869

OLD AND NEW SCHOOL

About the year 1825 the peace of the Church began seriously to be disturbed by controversies respecting the Plan of Union. Against the plan an increasing protest was made by many persons from year to year. In 1827 the right to vote in the Assembly was taken from the delegates of the Congregational Associations, and by 1830 their representation therein ceased. In 1826 a protest was entered on the minutes of the Assembly, signed by forty-eight persons, objecting to the reception, as commissioners, of committeemen from mixed churches which had Presbyterian pastors, and in 1832 the feeling that the presence of such persons in the Assembly as members was not warranted by the Constitution had become so strong, that formal resolutions were presented against the practice and passed by a considerable majority. In addition to questions constitutional in their nature, there were also questions of policy which forced themselves upon the Church. The contributions of many of the churches for home mission objects were made to the American Home Missionary Society. The contributions to

foreign missions were made to the American Board. A large portion of the Church contended that the time had come for the conduct by strictly denominational agencies of all evangelistic work, and the Pittsburgh Synod in 1831 constituted itself as the Western Foreign Missionary Society. Those opposed to the establishment of denominational agencies belonged to the party known as the "New School"; those who advocated it, to the "Old School." Doctrinal and other questions were also to a considerable extent raised in the controversy. The best authorities, however, are of the opinion that the main issues which divided the Church, were those relating to constitutional law and to general missionary policy. This view is substantiated not only by a study of the history of the Church for fifteen years preceding the great schism, but also by the fact that, when, after thirty years, it was proposed to unite the long-separated branches of the Church, doctrinal differences, though in some particulars as marked in 1867 as in 1837, did not suffice to prevent reunion. The acts of the Assembly of 1837 are also a part of the evidence of the correctness of this position. The Assembly first of all, on May 23, by a vote of one hundred and forty-three to one hundred and ten, abrogated the Plan of Union with the General Association of Connecticut. On June 1 it passed a resolution "that by the operation of the abrogation

of the Plan of Union of 1801 the Synod of the Western Reserve is hereby declared to be no longer a part of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." This action was followed successively by resolutions against the American Home Missionary Society and the American Education Society, by the excision of the Synods of Utica, Geneva and Genesee, and by the establishment of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. When the Assembly of 1838 met, the "New School" commissioners protested against the exclusion of the delegates from the four exscinded Synods, organized an Assembly of their own in the presence of the sitting Assembly, and then withdrew from the house. The matters at issue between the Schools were referred to the civil courts for settlement. The first decision was in favor of the New School, but the case on appeal was decided in favor of the Old School. By the latter decision the Old School Assembly became legally the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

PROGRESS DURING DIVISION

Into the history of the divided branches of the Church we cannot enter at length. Both branches grew slowly, but steadily; both were benefited by revivals of religion at intervals—notably, the revival of 1857; and both made progress in the organization of their own benevolent work.

As early as 1852 the New School Assembly began to appoint committees for the receipt and control of the benevolent contributions from the churches, and in 1862 it constituted the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions.

THE PUBLICATION CAUSE

In 1838 the Old School Assembly established the Board of Publication, and in 1852 the New School Assembly committed the same work to a committee. This agency of the Church is now second to none in importance and usefulness. The habitual thought of a people is largely shaped by the character of its reading. Great is the need, therefore, that Christian thought shall through the printed page reach and influence the mind of the nation. The dissemination of a religious literature was at first the only province of this Board, but its work has been providentially and greatly enlarged by the wonderful development of the Church's Sabbath-school interests. The children of the Church are now the special constituency of this agency, and its name was accordingly changed by the General Assembly, in 1887, to "The Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work."

THE CHURCH ERECTION FUND

The Board of the Church Erection Fund was first established as an organization in 1844 (O. S.) and in 1854 (N. S.). This Board has charge of

the work of erecting church buildings and parsonages in feeble congregations. The aid it has given in the conservation of new churches, through the erection of church edifices, thus sustaining them in weakness until they attain to strength, cannot be overestimated.

MINISTERIAL RELIEF

The cause of ministerial relief was committed by the Old School General Assembly to a Board in 1855; its beginnings, however, can be traced back to 1719, when the General Synod voted from its fund a sum of money for the widow of Rev. John Wilson. In 1755 the Synod of Philadelphia established the corporation known as "The Widows' Fund"; the action of the General Assembly of 1855, therefore, simply gave organic shape to a form of public and private benevolence long existent. Deeply impressed with a sense of the obligations resting upon the Church, with regard to its disabled ministers and the widows and orphans of deceased ministers, the Assembly of 1887 recommended the raising by the Church of a "Centenary Fund" of one million dollars, to be added to the permanent fund of the Board ($365,538), the interest of which was annually to be devoted to the relief of the Church's disabled veterans and their families. This fund, when completed in 1889, added immediately to the Board's endowments, the sum of $605,000.

MISSIONS TO FREEDMEN

The mission work among the colored people in this country is by no means of recent date. At the beginning of the century the General Assembly adopted measures with a view to their evangelization. Ministers in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and other southern states gave much time, labor and money to the preaching of the gospel to the slaves, and at the opening of the Civil War there were some 12,000 colored communicants in churches under the Assembly's care. Special effort, however, was put forth by the Church for the Freedmen, when victory crowned the arms of the republic. The two branches organized each a committee to take charge of the work—the New School in 1865, and the Old School in 1866. In 1882 this united committee was erected into the Board of Missions for Freedmen.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SOUTH

The progress of the two branches of the Church was checked by disruption. The New School Assembly of 1857 took strong ground in opposition to slavery, as a result of which several Southern Presbyteries withdrew, and organized the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church. This body in 1863 formed a union with the body now known as the "Presbyterian Church in the United States."

In May, 1861, the Old School Assembly met at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with but thirteen commissioners present from the states which had seceded from the Union. Dr. Gardiner Spring, a commissioner from the Presbytery of New York, offered resolutions recommending a day of prayer, professing loyalty to the Federal government, and declaring it a duty to support that government and preserve the Union. These resolutions were passed by a vote of one hundred and fifty-six to sixty-six, the minority, however, simply protesting against the Assembly's acting upon political issues and determining questions of civil allegiance. The "Spring Resolutions" were the alleged reason for the organization of the "Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America," which met first in General Assembly at Augusta, Georgia, December 4, 1861, was enlarged by union in 1863 with the United Synod, upon the cessation of hostilities in 1865 took the name of the "Presbyterian Church in the United States," and in 1886 formally celebrated its quarter centennial. Its numbers were increased in 1869 by the adherence of that part of the Synod of Kentucky which by "Declaration and Testimony," protested in 1867 against the action of the Old School General Assembly with regard to the ministers and members of the Church South, and in 1874, for the same reason, by the accession of part of the Synod of Missouri. These additions increased the mem-

bership by over twenty thousand. The strength of this Church in 1916 was 1861 ministers, 3437 churches and 348,223 communicants. The Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., had in 1916 within the same territory 1713 ministers, 2372 churches, and 209,939 communicants.

VII

REUNION AND ADVANCE, 1870-1900

MOVEMENT TOWARD UNION

Correspondence between the "Old School" and "New School" General Assemblies was established as early as 1862, under the pressure of a widely extended and growing fraternal feeling. The two Assemblies met in St. Louis in 1866, and partook together of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Committees of conference with a view to union were appointed the same year, and in 1867 a Presbyterian national convention held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, gave a powerful impulse to the reunion movement. The report of the committees of conference, though adopted by both the Assemblies of 1868, was rejected by a decided majority of the Old School Presbyteries, and reunion, as a result, was consummated on the basis of the "Standards pure and simple," November 12, 1869, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Article II of the Plan of Union, containing this basis, reads as follows: "The Reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received

and adopted as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and the Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity."

In connection with Reunion a memorial fund was raised, the amount of which was reported as being $7,883,983.85. It was mainly expended in paying church debts, in endowing colleges and in erecting new houses of worship.

THE CONTROVERSY OF 1891

Since the Reunion of 1869, the Church has made steady progress along all lines, and its harmony has been seriously threatened only by controversy (1891-1894), as to the sources of authority in religion, and the authority and credibility of Holy Scripture, a controversy which terminated in the adoption by the General Assembly, at Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1899, of a unanimous deliverance affirming the loyalty of the Church to its historic views on these subjects.

THE VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI

The progress of the Church in the regions beyond the Mississippi has been notable from their earliest occupation, and was stimulated by the Reunion. The work of Home Missions usually kept step with the advance of population, and the organization of churches was carried forward in a most effective manner. This progress is shown

in part, before and after 1869, by the dates of the erection of certain Synods of the West, as follows: Wisconsin, 1851; Iowa, 1852; Minnesota, 1858; Kansas, 1869; Nebraska, 1874; Texas, 1878; Dakota, 1884; South Dakota and North Dakota, 1888; Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, 1895.

THE PACIFIC COAST AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

The Church on the Pacific Coast began with the mission work of Marcus Whitman, M. D., in Oregon, and by the organization of the church at Wai-ye-lat-poo (Kamiah) in 1838. Whitman saved the far Northwest to the United States, and laid the foundations of Christian work in two great Synods. Church work in California followed promptly upon the acquisition of territory from Mexico, and its settlement in 1849. The Synod of the Pacific, now California, was established in 1852, and included the entire Pacific Coast within its jurisdiction. The Synod of Alta California, was established in 1856, and was consolidated with its sister Synod in 1870. In 1876, the Synod of Columbia (now Oregon), was erected, and in 1890, that of Washington. In the adjoining Rocky Mountain regions the dates of the establishment of the Synods were: Colorado, 1871, Utah, 1883; New Mexico, 1889; Montana, 1893; Idaho, 1909; and Arizona, 1912. In 1881 the great majority of the Synods were consolidated upon the principle of conforming their boundaries to

the boundaries of the states in which they were located.

THE PROGRESS, 1875-1900

Other important events in the history of the Church during the closing half of the nineteenth century were the following:

In 1875 the General Assembly entered into the "Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System," composed of about ninety national and denominational Churches located on all the continents, and having in 1916 a total of 35,000,000 of adherents. In 1881 the important work of temperance reform was entrusted to the Committee on Temperance, and this committee was made a Board in 1912. The establishment of the Board of Aid for Colleges and Academies, in 1883, was caused by the demands of the West for institutions of the higher education. This Board is now entitled the College Board. In 1888 the Centennial of the General Assembly was jointly celebrated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by the Churches South and North, and a Centenary Fund of $605,000 was raised, which was added, as elsewhere stated, to the Endowment Fund of the Board of Ministerial Relief. Correspondence between the two General Assemblies, of the United States of America and of the United States (South), was first brought about in 1882. Plans of cooperation between the Churches have also been adopted from time to time.

VIII

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

THE NEW EVANGELISM

As the twentieth century opened, the Church began to organize for an advance in all its departments of work. The Assembly's Committee on the Twentieth Century Fund by concerted effort brought about a decided increase in contributions for church support, and also for missions and benevolence, an increase which has continued until the present time. Realizing that the greatest asset and the supreme test of a Christian Church is its possession of evangelistic power, the General Assembly established, in 1901, the Evangelistic Committee, through whose efforts under God's blessing, a decided uplift has been given to spiritual conditions, not only within the Presbyterian, but also among many other denominations. As evidence of the value of this evangelistic movement the number of persons added to the congregations on confession of faith was more than doubled between 1899 and 1916. It is to be remembered in the words of Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States, that the Presbyterian Church "though it has made no boast or shout has been an aggressive church, has been a missionary Church from the beginning."

A CONCISE HISTORY OF

THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN REUNION

Believing that the Churches in the United States of the Presbyterian family should be brought closer together, in 1903 the General Assembly appointed a Committee on Church Coöperation and Union, as a result of whose activity, terms of union were framed (1904-1905) between the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. This union was acomplished on the basis of the Westminster Standards as revised in 1903, at the respective General Assemblies held at Des Moines, Iowa, and Decatur, Illinois, in 1906. There has been considerable litigation in connection with this union, but in any event the additions through it to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America amounted to about 1200 ministers, 1800 churches and 90,000 communicants. It is noteworthy that this Reunion of Churches was the third effected in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America on the basis of the Standards, the other two being the Reunions of 1758 and 1869. The Westminster Standards are a living power in relation to American Presbyterian Churches. One reason for this is the fact that they are the only ecumenical Standards of Doctrine ever adopted by the religious representatives of English-speaking evangelical Christendom.

One of the results of the union with the Cumberland Church, was the establishment of two Synods, additional to Atlantic (1868), and Catawba (1887), composed only of ministers and congregations of colored people, namely, Canadian and East Tennessee. The race and nationality principle in Church organization was also recognized in 1912 by the erection of the West German Synod. This principle had been accepted, however, in colonial times in the Welsh, the German, and the Colored Churches in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, and later on down to the present time in churches of these and other nationalities, wherever needed.

GENERAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The Committee on Church Coöperation and Union was also instrumental in establishing the "Council of Reformed Churches in the United States holding the Presbyterian System," organized in 1907 through the adoption of "Articles of Agreement," and bringing into closer relations seven of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in the country. The Church through it was, in addition, a factor in the organization in December, 1908, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, of the "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America," composed of thirty denominations, having about 17,000,000 communicants, and representing a majority of the people of the

United States. The Church, further, has always given its cordial support to interdenominational organizations such as the American Bible Society, the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States, and the United Society of Christian Endeavor. It fellowships freely with all evangelical Christians, and recognizes fully the rights of conscience of all persons.

THE REVISION OF THE CONFESSION

The Confession of Faith, which had been amended since 1788 only in 1887, as elsewhere indicated, was in 1903 revised to a considerable extent. The amendments were in chapters x, xvi, xxii, and xxv, a Declaratory Statement also was adopted as to chapters iii and x, denying that they were fatalistic in teaching, and chapters xxxiv and xxxv were added to the Confession, respectively entitled, "Of the Holy Spirit," and "Of the Love of God and Missions." This revision was for the express purpose of the disavowal of certain improper inferences drawn by persons outside the Church, as to its doctrines on God's eternal decree, the love of God for all mankind, and his readiness to bestow his saving grace on all who seek it. The Church also officially declared that all persons dying in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, "who works when and where and how he pleases."

One year prior to the Revision of 1902, the General Assembly adopted unanimously a "Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith, for a better understanding of our doctrinal beliefs." While not a Standard of Doctrine, the Statement has decided value as explanatory of the Confession.

In addition to the brief statement of the Reformed Faith the General Assembly also approved in 1906 a Book of Common Worship prepared by a committee appointed by the Assembly, and distinctly declared to be solely for voluntary use.

THE SUPPLY OF VACANT CHURCHES

The related questions of the employment of unemployed ministers and the supply of vacant churches have constituted for more than a century one of the great problems of the Church. In 1912 the General Assembly and the Presbyteries adopted a constitutional provision authorizing the General Assembly to appoint a Permanent Committee to endeavor to solve the problem. The committee was appointed, and has made considerable progress in this most important movement.

MEN'S WORK AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The administrative or governmental standards have been frequently amended since 1788, and during recent years provision has been made for more efficient and united work by church mem-

bers through the recognition of their right to establish voluntary organizations under church supervision, as provided in chapter xxiii of the Form of Government, entitled "Of the Organizations of the Church." This trend to expansion of service found expression in the organization in 1906 of the Presbyterian Brotherhood, now the Permanent Committee on Men's Work. It found important expression also in the establishment of the Executive Commission of the General Assembly in 1908, and by the adoption in 1915 of chapter xxvi of the Form of Government, entitled "Of Executive Commissions." This chapter authorizes each Church judicatory, from the Presbytery up to the Assembly, to use this form of organization for administrative service between the regular meetings of the appointing bodies, and the Executive Commission of the General Assembly has brought into unity the work of the several missionary and benevolent Boards. It also reports annually a budget for the Boards and for the Assembly. In addition to the Executive Commission, the Church established in 1907 through the adoption of chapter xiii of the Book of Discipline, permanent judicial commissions for the several judicatories.

THE MINISTERIAL SUSTENTATION FUND

The Ministerial Sustentation Fund was established in 1906, in order to make provision for

pensions for ministers who preferred to contribute toward their own support in old age, and who believed that ministers were entitled to pensions on the basis of service rendered. This fund was chartered as a Board, in 1909, and in 1912 was combined with the Board of Relief. Under the joint auspices of the two Boards a movement was set on foot in 1913 to raise $10,000,000 to provide for the needs of ministers and their families, when retired through infirmities either of disease or of old age.

THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

The Presbyterian Church has always maintained the rights of woman in the Church in connection with administrative affairs. Women members have usually voted for pastors and other church officers. Women's societies for charitable purposes have always existed, and Women's Foreign Mission societies were organized as early as 1870. There are now in existence six of these organizations, all in connection with the Board of Foreign Missions, and bringing to this great cause the earnestness and efficiency of more than three fifths of the membership of the Churches. The Woman's Committee of Home Missions was organized in 1879, and was incorporated as a Board in 1915. Its work is complementary to that of the Board of Home Missions. There is also a Woman's department of the Freedmen's

Board. The last step taken by the Church in connection with the Christian service of woman, was the adoption, in 1915, of a provision in the Form of Government, authorizing the election and setting apart of deaconesses in each of the churches, these officers to be under the direction of the Session.

THE BOARDS AND AGENCIES, 1916

The general work of the Presbyterian Church in lines of Christian activity has been conducted from the beginning either under the supervision of the General Presbytery, the General Synod, or the General Assembly. Under its power "to superintend the concerns of the whole Church," the Assembly, from time to time, as stated elsewhere, has appointed various Agencies for the promotion of the general interests of the Kingdom of Christ, some of them temporary. Those which are permanent, for convenience of reference, are all named below, the years given after the names being the dates in each case of their original establishment.

Home Missions	1816
Education	1819
Foreign Missions	1837
Publication	1838
Church Erection	1844
Ministerial Relief	1855
Freedmen	1865
Woman's Foreign Missions	1870
Woman's Home Missions	1879

Temperance	1881
Colleges	1883
Evangelism	1901
Men's Work	1906

THE PERSISTENT ADVANCE

It is interesting to recall that the administrative affairs of the Church of Scotland at the time of the Reformation were handled by duly appointed committees known as "Tables." Representative government, whether in Church or State, works through responsible agencies under the control of legislative bodies. A brief account of the present work of the American agencies is of interest. During the fiscal year ending March 31, 1916, the work of Home Missions under the Board of that name, aided 1912 churches, and had in the field 1854 missionaries. In addition, the work carried on by the Synods showed that under synodical Home Missions, 3620 churches and missions were aided, and 2558 missionary workers were employed. The Woman's Board of Home Missions, operated largely along special lines, chiefly educational, is sustained by the women and young people of the Church, and has connected with it about 14,000 societies of one kind and another. The work of the Board of Foreign Missions was carried on, in the same year, by 27 general missions, 162 stations, 1330 missionaries, 6097 native helpers, and 914 fully organized churches with

148,688 communicants. Its agencies also printed 32,446,850 pages of Christian truth in over twenty languages, and conducted 172 hospitals and dispensaries. The Women's Boards of Foreign Missions coöperating with the General Board are sustained by many societies in like manner as the Woman's Home Mission Board.

The Board of Education had under its care in 1916, 831 candidates for the ministry and is active in providing for the spiritual welfare of students in state universities and other institutions, and also for the supervision of training schools for lay workers, whose employment is an increasing feature of the activity of the Christian Churches in the twentieth century.

The Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work employed 123 missionaries who organized during the year, 843 schools, and in addition provided a Sabbath-school literature of great bulk and greater value. The Board of Church Erection enabled many congregations needing aid to erect adequate Church edifices, and since 1845 has thus aided 10,866 congregations. The Board of Relief had under its care, in 1916, 1555 persons, men, women and children and is heartily supported by the Church in its effort for larger provision for all its worthy objects. The Board of Missions for Freedmen supervised 438 churches and mission stations, with 27,916 communicants, and 24,446 Sabbath-school pupils. It also aided in sus-

taining 272 ministers and 494 teachers. The College Board coöperated in 1916 with 46 educational institutions organically connected with the Presbyterian Church, and with 18 which were under Presbyterian influence. The Board acts upon the basis that Christian colleges furnish the greater number of Christian workers. The Permanent Committees on Evangelism, and on Men's Work, are comparatively new, and their work, while prosperous, is largely awaiting a development commensurate with the spiritual resources of the Church.

The great progress made in beneficence is shown by the fact that in 1789 the total contributions of the Church for missionary and charitable purposes were $852.00, and in 1916, $7,818,297.00. The total amount contributed the latter year for congregational expenses was $20,109,322.00 and the total of all contributions for all purposes was $28,122,426.00.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

The official publications of the Church are the Records of the General Presbytery, 1706-1716, of the General Synod, 1717-1788, and of the General Assembly 1789-1916, each in printed form. They are the most complete ecclesiastical records in the United States of America. The Minutes of the General Assembly and the Reports of the Boards are now both issued annually.

GROWTH, 1640-1916

The growth of the Presbyterian Church, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and since, is notable, as appears from the figures of the comparative table herewith given.

Years	Ministers	Churches	Communicants
1640	5	3	500
1690	10	18	1,500
1705	12	22	2,000
1717	19	40	3,000
1758	98	200	10,000
1789	177	431	18,000
1800	189	449	20,000
1837	2,140	2,965	220,557
1870	4,238	4,526	446,561
1880	5,044	5,489	578,671
1890	6,158	6,894	775,903
1900	7,467	7,750	1,007,689
1910	9,073	10,011	1,339,000
1915	9,685	9,996	1,513,240
1916	9,739	9,953	1,560,009

While the population of the country has increased about twenty times since 1800, the membership of the Church has increased about seventy-eight times in the same period, and the total additions on profession of faith during the century ending with 1916, appear to have been about 3,500,000. What a stimulus for future sustained spiritual advance there is in this record!

PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES

The history of the Church in all its course is one of moral power and spiritual uplift. Its

Home Missions have been continuously upon the frontier of the advancing civilization of the American people. Its ministers and congregations have been essential factors in securing the moral and spiritual as well as the material welfare of the Republic. Its influence has been decided upon the political interests of the land, for both the Church and the nation are direct products of the great Protestant Reformation. The Church has furnished Revolutionary leaders such as John Witherspoon, and also Presidents of the United States, such as Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Harrison, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. In heathen lands the Church has exerted a quiet but mighty influence in elevating the standdards of morality, in sanctifying the family relation, in introducing the element of fraternity, and above all in bringing to bear upon great masses of men and women the divine power which accompanies the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether at home or abroad, the Church has been, under God, in all the relations in which human beings stand each to the other, and in all the aspirations of humanity, both for this world and the world to come, a savor of life unto life.

The Church, also, as its history evidences, is strong in its Scriptural creed and its popular sympathies; strong also in its relation to the history and development of the land in which

God has placed it; strong, in addition, in its hold upon the influential elements in the diverse population of the Republic; strong, further, in numbers and in the material, intellectual and moral resources under its control. It possesses noble principles, historic prestige, far-reaching influence, multiplied resources. For the Presbyterian Church, America is but another name for opportunity, and if it would rise in the present to the level of its providential privileges, then, with all charity toward other denominations of Christians, it should devote its great resources, both of men and means, to the wide dissemination of the truths which it maintains, and for the largest possible development of its own institutions. Loyalty to the Presbyterian system involves loyalty to its widespread agencies; demands a persistent, resolute, aggressive movement for the meeting in full, along denominational lines, of denominational responsibilities. It is along these lines that the Presbyterian Church will vindicate to the world its right to exist as a Church, that it will evidence clearly that it has a mission in the earth, that it will rise to the full height both of opportunity and responsibility, and that it will effectively aid in the extension and final victory of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

INDEX

Abingdon Presbytery, 43.
Adopting Act, 23.
Alexander, Archibald, 49.
Alliance of Reformed Churches, 66.
American Board, Foreign Missions, 53.
American Home Missionary Society, 55.
American Independence, 33, 41.
Andrews, Jedidiah, 18, 20, 21, 26, 54.
Annapolis, 10.
Atlantic Synod, 69.
Auburn Seminary, 49.
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod, 8.

Baltimore Presbytery, 43.
Bancroft, George, 42.
Baptism, infant, 12.
Barbadoes Company, 18.
Baxter, Richard, 10.
Beale, Capt. Ninian, 10.
Biddle University, 49.
Bloomfield Seminary, 49.
Boards, names and dates, 75.
Bolton, Robert, 9.
Boudinot, Elias, 41.
Boyd, John, 20.
Brainerd, David and John, 50.
Brewster, William, 11.

Caledonia Presbytery, 14.
Calendar, change in, 19.
California, 65.
Camp meetings, 48.
Carlisle Presbytery, 43.
Carolinas, Synod of, 43.
Catechisms, 23, 24, 35.
Centenary Fund, 66.
Christian colleges, 77.
Christian Reformed Church, 7.
Church Coöperation and Union, Committee, 68, 69.
Church Erection Board, 58, 76.
Church, Growth of, 29, 50, 51, 65, 78.
Church Government, Principles of, 37.
Church, Independence of, 24.
Church membership, terms of, 39.
Church and State, 24, 25, 35.
Civil Magistrate, 35.
College Board, 66.
Confession of Faith, 8, 23, 24, 29, 35, 41, 64, 68, 70.
Congregational Associations, 55.
Congregationalism, 24, 32, 34.
Connecticut, State of, 12, 13, 24, 45.
Connecticut, General Association, 32, 44, 46.
Constitution of church adopted, 34.

Constitution, Federal, influence on, 40.
Continental Congress, 33.
Cornbury, Lord, 17.
Council of Reformed Churches, 69.
Covenanters, 17, 42.
Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 8, 48.
Cumberland Presbytery, 48.

Darien, Isthmus of, 14.
Davies, Samuel, 20, 29.
Deaconess, office of, 74.
Declaration and Testimony, 61.
Denton, Richard, 11, 12, 54.
Decatur Assembly, 68.
Des Moines Assembly, 68.
Dickinson, Jonathan, 28, 54.
Divisions, 26, 27, 48, 56.
Doctrinal system, 36.
Dort, Canons of, 8.
Doughty, Francis, 10, 11, 17, 24.
Dubuque Seminary, 49.
Dutch Calvinists, 12.
Dutchess County, Presbytery, 30, 43.

Education, Board of, established, 53, 54, 76.
Education, beginnings of, 31, 53.
Edwards, Jonathan, 26.
Elizabeth, N. J., church, 13, 28.
Elizabeth River, Va., 9.
England, 9.
Episcopalians, 16, 17, 32, 34, 42.
Evan, David, 15.
Evangelistic Committee, 67, 77.
Executive Commissions, 72.

Fairfield, N. J., church, 13.
Fatalism, 70.
Federal Council, churches, 69.
Federal Union, 41.
Foreign Missions, early work, 52, 53.
Foreign Missions, Board of, 53, 75.
Freedmen's Board, 60, 75.
French churches, 8, 14.
Freehold, N. J., church, 13.

Gardiner, John, 20.
General Assembly as judicatory, 38; basis of representation, 43; relation to Church, 44; the first, 43; Centennial, 66.
Glasgow and Ayr, Synod of, 17.
Government, church, 37, 64.
Great Valley, Pa., Church of, 15.
Growth of Church, 29, 50, 51, 65, 78.

Hall, James, 50.
Hamilton, Alexander, 41.
Hampton, John, 20.
Hanover Presbytery, 29, 43.
Hartford North Association, Declaration of, 45.

Harvard College, 18, 26.
Heidelberg Catechism, 9.
Hempstead, Long Island, 12.
Hill, Matthew, 10.
Hodge, Charles, 27.
Holland, 7.
Home Missions, Board of, 52, 58, 75.
Home Missions, beginnings of, 50, 52.
Horton, Azariah, 52.
Huguenots, 8, 14, 42.

Infants, salvation of, 70.
Ireland, 11, 22.

Jamaica, N. Y., 12.
Judicial commissions, 72.

Kamiah, Church, Oregon, 65.
Kentucky, revival, 47.
Kentucky Seminary, 49.

Laggan Presbytery, 15.
Lane Seminary, 49.
Lewes Presbytery, 43.
Lexington Presbytery, 43.
Liberty, civil and religious, 16.
Lincoln University, 49.
Lindley, John, 51.
Log College, 26.
Londonderry, 17.
Long Island Presbytery, 21.
Londonderry Presbytery, 22.
Lord, Joseph, 14.

McCormick Seminary, 49.
MacNish, George, 20, 21.
Madison, James, 41.
Makemie, Francis, 11, 15, 17, 19, 20, 54.
Maryland, 10, 15.
Massachusetts, 24, 45.
Mecklenburgh Declaration, 33.
Membership, terms of, 39.
Memorial Fund, Reunion, 64.
Men's Work, Committee on, 71, 77.
Ministerial Qualifications, standards of, 54.
Ministerial Relief, see *Relief*.
Ministerial Sustentation Fund, 72.
Minneapolis Assembly, 64.
Mississippi territory, 50.
Mississippi valley, progress, 64.

Nantes, edict of, 14.
Neshaminy, 26.
New Amsterdam, 12.
Newark, N. J., church, 13.
New Brunswick Presbytery, 27, 43.
New Castle, Del., church, 13.
New Castle Presbytery, 21, 43.
New England, colonists in, 11.
New England, Presbyterians in, 47.
New England, Synod, 22.
New Hampshire Association, 45.
New York, Presbytery, 43.
New York, Synod, 27, 63.
New York City, 17.

New York and New Jersey Synod, 43.
North and South Carolina, Presbyterians in, 13.

Old and New Side, 26, 27, 29.
Old and New School, 56, 63.
Omaha Seminary, 49.
Orange Presbytery, 30, 43.
Oregon, 65.

Pacific Coast, early missions, 65.
Philadelphia, City, 18; Presbytery, 21, 43; first church 18; second church, 43; Synod, 43.
Plan of Union, 32, 46, 55.
Plymouth Pilgrims, 11.
Presbyterian Church, South, 8, 60, 61, 66.
Presbyterianism, American, origins, 7.
Presbytery, the first, 19.
Presbytery as a judicatory, 38.
Princeton College, 28.
Princeton Theological Seminary, 48.
Privileges and Duties, 78.
Publication and Sabbath-School Work, Board of, 58, 76; beginnings of, 31.
Publications, official, 77.
Puritans, 9, 10, 16, 42.

Redstone Presbytery, 43.
Rehoboth Church, 15.
Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, 7.
Reformed (German) Church in the U. S., 7.
Reformed faith, brief statement, 71.
Reformed Presbyterian Church, 8.
Relief and Sustentation, Board, 54, 66, 76; Centenary Fund, 59; New funds, 76.
Reunion, Old and New Sides, 29; Old and New Schools, 63; Cumberland, 68.
Reunion fund, 64.
Revision of Confession, 70.
Revivals, 26, 46, 47.
Revolution of 1776, 42.
Rice, David, 46, 47.
Robinson, John, 11, 12.
Rocky Mountains, 65
Rodgers, John, 43.

St. Louis Assembly, 63.
Salem Presbytery, 22.
San Francisco Seminary, 49.
Scotch-Irish, 15, 16.
Scotland, church of, 17, 75.
Session, Church, 38, 39.
Settlements, first, 7.
Severn River, 10.
Slavery, 60.
Smith, William, 20.
Snow Hill Church, 15.
Snow Hill Presbytery, 21.
Southold, N. Y., church, 13.
South Carolina Presbytery 43.
Spring, Gardiner, resolutions, 61.

State and Church, relation between, 24, 25, 35.
Stevens, William, 15.
Stobo, Archibald, 14.
Stoddard, James, 20.
Suffolk Presbytery, 43.
Synod, General, organized, 21; and American independence, 33.
Synod, as judicatory, 38.

Taylor, Nathaniel, 20.
Temperance, Board of, 66.
Tennent, Gilbert and William, 26.
Theological Seminaries, 48.
Traill, William, 11.
Twentieth Century Fund Committee, 67.

Ulster Presbyterians, 42.
Union. See *Reunion.*
Union Seminary, N. Y., 49.
Union Seminary, Va., 49.
United Presbyterian Church, 8.
United Synod, 60.
United States, Constitution of, 40; Presidents of, 79.

Vacancy and Supply Committee, 71.
Vermont, General Association, 45.
Virginia, Synod of, 43.

Wandsworth Presbytery, 9.
Washington, George, 42.
Welsh Churches, 8, 15, 21.
Western Foreign Missionary Society, 56.
West German Synod, 69.
Westminster Standards, 23, 63, 68.
Whitaker, Alexander, 9.
Whitefield, George, 26, 27, 29.
Whitman, Marcus, 65.
Williams, Roger, 24.
Wilson, John, 20.
Witherspoon, John, 30, 33, 41, 43, 79.
Woman, place in the church, 73.
Women's Boards, 73, 75.
Woodbridge, N. J., church, 13.
Worcester, Mass., 22.
Word of God, 37.
Worship, Directory of, 39; Book of common, 71.

Yale College, 26.
Yard, Joseph, 20.
Yorkshire, England, 11.
Youngs, John, 13.

ADDRESS

ON THE

200TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

GENERAL SYNOD

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

DELIVERED AT THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dallas, Texas, May 18, 1917

BY

WM. HENRY ROBERTS, D.D., LL.D.
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Printed by order of the General Assembly

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ADDRESS ON THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

THE Synod which was established at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in September, 1716, by the General Presbytery, was, in a distinct and positive sense, the Synod of the American Presbyterian Church, for no other Presbyterian Church then existed in the territory now included within the United States of America. All other Churches of the Presbyterian faith and order in America are later developments.

As the governing body of the Church, the Synod was, in many particulars, unique, and it is upon these special features that emphasis will be laid in this address. The principal facts of the history are discussed in quite a number of volumes, and have been dealt with recently in various publications, both in newspaper and book form.

It is important in connection with this celebration to note, first of all, that it is exactly one hundred years since the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America began, through the General Assembly, active work in Louisiana and other parts of the Southwest. Rev. Sylvester Larned was appointed as a missionary to the

Southwest by the General Assembly meeting at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in May, 1817. As was then the custom, the Assembly named the missionaries directly. Mr. Larned is the forty-second person in a list of forty-five appointed in 1817, and the record tells us that his appointment was made "especially with a view to establish the ministry of the gospel in the city of New Orleans; and in traveling to that city, he will commence his route from Detroit, pass through Vincennes, Kaskaskia, and St. Louis." Mr. Larned was installed as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans in 1818 and died in 1820. He was the first Presbyterian pastor of that important center.

Great truly has been the growth of the Church during the last hundred years, and large the blessing which God has sent down upon the faithful labors of those devoted missionaries who first carried the gospel through the entire Southwest. Such a one for instance as James Hall served on his mission seven months and thirteen days, and received eighty-six dollars for his support. It is because of such lives of sacrificial labor that this Assembly, the lineal successor of the Synod of 1717, is privileged to meet in one of the principal cities of the Southwest and to be the guest of Churches which are loyal to the faith and traditions of the fathers.

The first feature to be emphasized in connection

with the history of the General Synod is that it was the product of a Christian Church born on American soil. It was constituted by a Presbytery which was self-organized. Its ministers, it is true, had been ordained to their high calling by various Church bodies in Scotland, in Ireland, and in New England (there were two graduates of Harvard), but no permission or authority for the organization of the Presbytery was requested from any existing ecclesiastical body. Ordinarily speaking, it is true that the Reformed Churches of Europe, notably the Church of Scotland, are to be regarded as the sources of the influences which produced the American Presbyterian Church. In a vital sense, the historic Church of Scotland is a mother to all the Presbyterian Churches of the United States, and other Churches, such as the Reformed Churches of Holland, France, Germany, and England, may also be regarded as standing in a parental relation to them. But it is to be emphasized that the one centrally organized body of believers which has had the longest continuous existence on American soil, was self-organized, ministers and ruling elders of different particular churches coming together for the purpose, filled with the desire to do their duty as Christian men. The Synod, therefore, represented in a distinct manner those tendencies in modern life, both ecclesiastical and civil, which have come to be designated by the word "Ameri-

canism." That word, invented by John Witherspoon, stands for one thing—for the liberty of Christians to organize for coöperative work. Americans stand upon their own feet.

A second feature connected with the history of the Synod is the fact that at its first meeting it proceeded to organize the work of the Church with a view to the future. The men who constituted of their own volition both the General Presbytery and the General Synod were men of vision. They were mentally of the folk who believe that where there is no vision the people perish, and they therefore began to lay foundations for a growing Church in the midst of a people with a future. They established in 1717 a fund for pious uses and took steps to further the work of missions. They also appointed every year an Executive Commission with power. These acts were the initial steps in organized benevolence. In many other ways, as the records show, from year to year, they evidenced by their acts that they realized the importance of the trust which had been committed to them of God. They were men equal to the varying situations of their lives, ready for any work which commended itself to them and having the foresight which is indispensable in connection with all human affairs, if success is to crown earnest and systematic effort. Above all other things,

they were men who relied upon the divine guidance, believing that God is, and that faith in God, whatever the outward conditions, is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

A third feature of the history shows that the Synod realized that the strength of a Christian Church is its possession of a distinctive type of Christian doctrine. From the beginning of the organization of the American Presbyterian Church, insistence was placed upon the fact that the persons associated therein were in full sympathy with the creeds of the Reformed Churches throughout the world. The Synod did not attempt to frame new standards of doctrine, for they realized that they were part of English-speaking Christendom, and that Evangelical Christians generally had reached a practically unanimous conclusion as to the systematic form of Bible doctrine, in the Standards framed in the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster Abbey, London, England, by the Assembly of Divines in 1643-1648. The Westminster Standards were not only Biblical but also ecumenical in a true sense, and as such were formally adopted at the meeting of the Synod in 1729, and subscription thereto was required from that year by all ministers and licentiates. The members of Synod did this of their own free will, and they did it to make

clear that in doctrine as well as in practice the American Presbyterian Church was a part of that great divine force known as the Protestant Reformation, which steadily had been reorganizing upon New Testament lines both the thought and life of the Christian world. The Synod established at Philadelphia in 1717 was one result of Luther's work at Wittenberg in 1517. The central thought of the Reformation was and is the great doctrine of the sovereignty of God's Word over human thought and life. Creed and life are inseparable. Every intelligent life is invariably the expression of some sort of creed. And that creed is truest and that life strongest which rests upon a sovereign God, is instinct as a result with the divine life, and is guided by the Word of God.

The General Synod in the year 1729 took action in favor of the independence of the Church, by the denial of the authority of the State over the Church. Chapter xxiii of the Westminster Confession of Faith deals with the power of the civil magistrate, and the Synod denied to the civil magistrate what the Westminster Assembly permitted—a controlling power over Synods with respect to "the exercise of their ministerial authority." It also denied to the civil magistrate the "power to persecute any for their religion." These were notable acts on the part of the Synod, appearing

to be the first declaration, by an organized Church on American soil, of the freedom of the Church from control by the State. In several colonies the Anglican Episcopal Church was the establishment. Even in New England at this time Church and State were united. Congregationalism, as first established in the colonies, was a chain whose links were steel. An organization of so-called independent Churches, its ministers were held to orthodoxy and its members to right living, by the strong arm of the civil law. It was the civil magistrate, at the call of the Church, who drove out from Massachusetts, Roger Williams the Baptist, and Francis Doughty the Presbyterian. The Congregational was the established Church in Connecticut until 1818, and in Massachusetts until 1834, and even to-day in three New England States there are legal provisions for the support of Congregational Churches by taxation. To the Presbyterian Church must the honor be given of the first definite statement, by an organized body on American soil, of what to-day is recognized as the distinctively American and true doctrine of the right relation between Church and State. That relation is expressed in the clear-cut statement, "A free Church in a free State."

It is natural, in connection with the Presbyterian Church, to pass from the thought of

religious liberty to that of evangelistic and missionary work. The General Synod of the Church, like the General Presbytery, was full of an aggressive evangelistic spirit. It provided for missionary work in destitute places at its first meeting, and in 1719 indicated its definite realization of the value of missions in cities, by voting the larger part of a sum of money received from Scotland to the First Presbyterian Church in New York City. Knowing that the great test of a Church's loyalty to Christ is its earnestness in the work of the salvation of souls, the Synod gave its warm support to revival movements. George Whitefield had no better friends in the American Colonies than the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church, and the first division in the Church was brought about by differences of opinion as to the need and value of revivals of religion. An additional cause of the division was the question as to whether in the extraordinary circumstances which had arisen, through the blessing of God upon the labors of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, persons might be ordained to the ministry who had not received a full education. The division lasted, however, only a short time, 1743-1758, and the revival and missionary spirit, instead of being lessened by the controversy, was deepened and intensified. As Benjamin Harrison, Presi-

dent of the United States, well said of the Church, "Though it has made no boast or shout, it has yet been an aggressive Church; it has been a missionary Church from the beginning."

The American Presbyterian Church was in a strong sense a patriotic Church. The opening of the Revolutionary struggle found the Presbyterian ministers and churches, to a man, on the side of the colonies. In 1775 the General Synod issued a pastoral letter, an extract from which indicates the spirit prevailing in the Church, and reads: "Be careful to maintain the union which at present subsists through all the colonies. In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, consists of delegates chosen by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect and encouraged in their difficult service, not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their resolutions, and let it be seen that they are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into execution." Contemporary with this letter of the Synod was the famous Mecklenburgh Declaration of Independence, renouncing all allegiance to Great Britain, passed by a convention in western North Carolina composed of delegates who were mostly Presbyterians, thus forestalling the action of the Colonial

Congress in the same line by more than a year. Further, in the sessions of the Colonial Congress, the influence of no delegate exceeded that wielded by Rev. John Witherspoon, president of Princeton College, the only clerical signer of the Declaration of Independence, "a man Scotch in accent and strength of conviction, but American at heart." The American Presbyterian Church never faltered in its devotion to the cause of the independence of these United States; its ministers and members periled all for their support, being ready, with Witherspoon, to die, if need be, in defense of civil and religious liberty.

The close relation between the Presbyterian Church and the nation is shown by the fact that the Constitution of the Church was adopted in the same year in which the Constitution of the United States was framed. The influence which the Presbyterian Church exercised for the securing of unity between the colonies was zealously employed, at the close of the war for independence, to bring them into a closer union. The main hindrance to the formation of the Federal Union, as it now exists, lay in the reluctance of many of the States to yield tc a general government any of the powers which they possessed. The Federal party, in its advocacy of closer union, had no more earnest and eloquent supporters than John Wither-

spoon, Elias Boudinot, and other Presbyterian members of the Continental Congress. Sanderson, in his "Lives of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence," states that "Witherspoon strongly combated the opinion expressed in Congress that a lasting federation among the States was impracticable, and he warmly maintained the absolute necessity of union to impart vigor and success to the measures of government." In this he was aided by many who had come to the views which he, as a Presbyterian, had always maintained. Slowly but surely, ideas of government in harmony with those of the Westminster Standards, were accepted as formative principles for the government of the United States, and that by many persons not connected with the Presbyterian Church. Among these were the great leaders in the Constitutional Convention: James Madison, a graduate of Princeton, who sat as a student under John Witherspoon; Alexander Hamilton, of Scotch parentage, whose familiarity with Presbyterian government is fully attested; and above all George Washington, who, though an Episcopalian, had so great a regard for the Presbyterian Church and its services to the country that he not only partook of Holy Communion with its members, but also gave public expression to his high esteem. It is not that the claim is made that the principles

of Presbyterian government were the sole source from which sprang the government of the Republic, but it is asserted that mightiest among the forces which made the colonies a nation were the governmental principles found in the Westminster Standards, and that the Presbyterian Church taught, practiced, and maintained in fullness, first in this land, that form of government in accordance with which the Republic has been organized. The historian Bancroft says, "The Revolution of 1776, so far as it was affected by religion, was a Presbyterian measure. It was the natural outgrowth of the principles which the Presbyterianism of the Old World planted in her sons, the English Puritans, the Scotch Covenanters, the French Huguenots, the Dutch Calvinists, and the Presbyterians of Ulster."

Another feature of the history of the Synod was its deep interest in education. Of the seven ministers of the original Presbytery, six were graduates of universities and colleges. The interest of the Presbyterian Church in education, however, was not solely because of its belief in an educated ministry. Presbyterians taught by the Holy Scriptures make religion a personal matter, not between a man and the Church, but between the individual soul and God, and this necessitates personal knowledge on the part of human beings of God's Word, God's law for human life. Education in religious truth is therefore a cardinal prin-

ciple for Presbyterians, and the steps are easy and swift to secular and popular education. This logical connection between Calvinism and education is recognized by Bancroft, who says Calvin was the first founder of the public-school system. It is also shown by the history of academic and popular education. Presbyterian Scotland established the first schools for popular education. Harvard and Yale universities were founded by men who believed in the Westminster Confession. The Presbyterian Synod itself founded the Log College and its successor, Princeton University. Educat on is one of the foundation stones of both Church and nation. Then honor to whom honor 's due. Honor to the men who believed in the Westminster Confession, who under its influence built colleges rather than cathedrals, and who believed both in educated ministers and an educated people!

The peculiar and distinctive feature of the history of the General Synod, above all other features, was that it stood out as the leading champion of true popular government. Several other important Churches held to Calvinistic doctrine, but the Synod was the chief representative, during its entire existence, of the government of the Church by authoritative representative assemblies. Presbyterianism is a form of Church government by representative assemblies composed of Presbyters, and so arranged as to realize

the visible unity of the whole Church. It is a government by representatives with authority, as over against Congregationalism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, against prelacy. Independency, as a form of Church polity, vests government in the congregation or the brotherhood of each particular church, and prelacy centers control in single men. There is in this matter of representative government an exact parallel between the government of the United States and that of the Presbyterian Church.

The Congress of the United States is an assembly of representatives of the people, and they are responsible to the people, not in the sense of the local constituency that elected them, but in the sense of the entire sovereign people who established the Constitution. The Constitution of the nation opens with the words, "We, the people of the United States." In the Church the General Assembly is the supreme governing body and represents, as the Constitution of the Church states, "in one body all the particular churches of the denomination." This idea is not modern. John Owen, the great commentator, in his "True Nature of a Gospel Church," states that a single congregation is to be governed by an eldership or Presbytery, that is, a bench or college of Presbyters, chosen by the people as their representatives, not as their deputies, chosen not to govern according to the will of the people but according to the

will of Christ, who ordained the Constitution of the Church, created its officers, and defined their functions. The poet statesman, John Milton, in his work, "The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelacy" uses the following language concerning the General Assembly: "Of this General Assembly every parochial Consistory is a right homogeneous and constituting part, being in itself a little Synod and moving towards a General Assembly upon a higher basis, in an even and firm progression, as those small squares in battle unite in one great cube, the main phalanx, an emblem of truth and steadfastness."

Presbyterianism is not a government by Presbyters as Presbyters, but by Presbyters assembled in Presbyteries. All the courts of the Church are substantially Presbyteries. The same elements are found in all of them, from the lowest to the highest. Representatives of the whole Church govern the representatives of each part, and that not by a direct control of the part but by controlling the power of the part, and all the local Presbyteries are combined by representatives into one great Presbytery, called as a rule the General Assembly.

The American Presbyterian Church organized itself upon the principles just stated, and constituted first a General Presbytery, then a General Synod having under it four local Presbyteries, and reached the consummation of its organiza-

tion in 1788 in the General Assembly, which "represents in one body all the particular churches of the denomination." The General Assembly is a nation-wide Presbytery, as truly a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, as the Congress of the United States.

It is important further to remember in this connection that the modern founder of representative government was John Calvin. That great theologian was also great as a statesman. In his "Institutes" he teaches the principles of representative government, and bases them upon the Bible.

Calvin's "Institutes," containing his theory of constitutional resistance to tyrants through representative magistrates, was for centuries a standard book among all Protestants. Probably no other theological work was so widely read and so influential as the "Institutes," from the time of the Reformation to the American Revolution. "At least seventy-four editions in nine languages, besides fourteen abridgments, appeared before the Puritan exodus to America, an average of one edition annually for three generations Huguenots, Scots, Dutchmen, Walloons, and Germans, and an overwhelming majority of the American colonists of the seventeenth century, were nurtured on its political theories as well as on the strong meat of its theology."

Calvin's teachings as to popular government

were based upon his fundamental premises of the absolute sovereignty of God, and of the resulting sovereignty of the Bible as the Word of God. This absolute divine authority "limited all earthly princes," and made both king and representative magistrate responsible to both God and men. Calvin moreover pictured that "singular and truly sovereign power of God" not as "idly beholding from heaven," "but as holding the helm of the universe."

Before his death Calvin had combined the theory of constitutional resistance to tyrants, through ordained representatives of the people, with another far-reaching idea, that of a fundamental written law. He emphasized to the modern world the distinct conception of a written constitution as an essential feature of the government of a state.

Consider what God has accomplished through these modern times for representative constitutional government! Think concisely upon the advance made.

In 1788 the only actual political federated republics in existence were the Swiss Confederation and the United States of America—about six million persons in all, and lacking all resources except faith in God, faith in the people, and a firm courage.

If we spread out a map of the world of to-day, for the purpose of comparing the territorial extent

of the different kinds of governments existing at the present, we find that the area covered by republics occupies approximately 30,250,000 square miles, or considerably more than one half the habitable surface of the globe.

If we add the area of the British Empire, the spirit of whose government is largely democratic, and whose "autonomous colonies," as the Dominions are now called, are virtually republics, the area of free government reaches the enormous total of about 41,500 000 square miles, or about four fifths of the inhabited earth.

Turning now to the proportions of the population of the globe under the republics and under other forms of government, we find that of the total inhabitants of the earth, estimated at 1,600,000,000, more than 850,000,000 are living under nominal republics; and if we add the population of the British Empire, which is called a commonwealth of popular governments, the total would be about 1,250,000,000, or more than three fourths of the human race. If to these areas and populations we add those under substantially constitutional governments, excluding all those under avowedly autocratic rule, we find only a small fraction of the globe still adhering to an autocratic system which only a century and a quarter ago was practically universal. Calvin's ideas of representative government are winning out all over the world. And it is most significant

that God has placed at the head of the American Republic, at this time of stress, in this hour of sharp conflict between democracy and autocracy, a man who believes in Calvin's principles. President Woodrow Wilson is a Presbyterian Ruling Elder.

The record which we have considered is one that is remarkable for the clearness of vision and the breadth of spirit which characterized the founders of the American Presbyterian Church. From the beginning they appeared to realize that theirs was an unequaled opportunity in relation to the political, moral, and spiritual welfare of mankind. In no particular were they narrow, short-sighted, or biased by mere material considerations. They evidently grasped the things which are unseen and eternal, and applied their spirit in the conduct of the things which are seen and temporal. The purposes which animated them are shown in a letter written by John Witherspoon in 1772 to the Committee of Dissenters in England. The extract reads: "We beg leave also to inform you that we are collecting the state of religious liberty in the several colonies on this continent and its progress in each of them from their first settlement, which may be capable of important uses in the grand struggle we or our posterity may be called to make in this glorious cause, in which the happiness of thousands yet unborn is so deeply interested."

One would almost think that Witherspoon had in vision conditions which prevail to-day throughout the world, and we may rest assured that he had a clear conception of what the struggle for American independence meant both for Americans and for humanity. His associates were men of like spirit and character. They united loyalty to country with loyalty to the Church, and read into their conception of Christianity elevated ideas and purposes which gave them to act, not for a day, but for all time. They looked forward to an hour when the Church of God should have attained to its rightful authority over human thought and conduct, and when everywhere men should have been enfranchised with the liberty which is through Christ Jesus. All hail to the men who were founders of the American Presbyterian Church, and through it promoters of true liberty both in Church and State, and whose endeavors along moral and religious lines gave an impetus to their influence which has increased through the passing years, so that to-day, for all lovers of humanity, faith is the substance of things hoped for, and ours is the assurance that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

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